

May 1, 2000

Illinois Commerce Commission  
527 E. Capitol Avenue  
Springfield, IL 62701

Subject: Disputed Ameritech Telephone Charges

Gentlemen:

I have a dispute with Ameritech regarding a telephone bill in the amount of about \$2,700. Ameritech has repeatedly harassed me, extracted payments contrary to my understanding of the law and cut-off my service while the matter has been under open file with the Illinois Commerce Commission.

Since the early 1990s, I have owned a one-person construction consulting firm that is located over my garage. I consult parties on cost overruns with respect to their construction projects. During 1998 and for most of 1999, I had two business voice lines and one computer modem line.

For 1998, prior to the December 1988 Ameritech billing, my phone bill averaged just under \$300 per month. The December billing totaled about \$1,060.70. I paid the December 1998 phone bill to avoid having service interrupted and I had planned on later disputing that bill after the Christmas holidays were over since the amount was so much out of the ordinary. However, before I could take action, I received another bill from Ameritech in early January 1999 for \$2,724.42.

Upon receipt of the January 1999 bill, I contacted Ameritech and inquired as to why both the January 1999 and December 1998 bills were so high. I explained that my phone bills heretofore averaged less than \$300. Ameritech responded that the amounts were primarily due to the computer modem phone line use and they forwarded a detailed printout of the modem line use by the date and time.

In essence, the Ameritech listing showed very heavy use of the modem line on almost every day between November 11, 1998 and January 7, 1999. The shocking thing about the Ameritech listing was that it showed use of the modem line up to 2,754 minutes per day which is about 45 hours! I told Ameritech that there must be an error since I only infrequently used the computer modem line and then only for several minutes duration. I also told Ameritech that my computer was broken and out of my office for repairs on some of the days that they had me using the modem line in a very heavy manner. Also, I informed them that I was out of town on business on other days for which they had recorded heavy modem line use.

In short, I objected to the December 1998 and January 1999 billings as reflecting modem line time that was not mine and much at variance to my historical modem line habits which they could obviously verify through their own records. I further asked for an adjustment to the January 1999 bill and they said that they would investigate the matter. Ameritech never called me back on this matter.

Also, in early January 1999, I further asked Ameritech if someone could be "hacking" my line and they said that they would investigate that issue: they soon called me back and said no. Because hacking was the only thing that could readily explain the high phone bills, I asked Ameritech to immediately change my computer modem line to a different number which they promptly did in early January 1999. Since that time, I have had no out-of-the-ordinary modem line bills.

Because I did not hear back from Ameritech on the January 1999 invoice adjustment request, I contacted them on or about January 22, 1999 and spoke with John Hadju (?). Mr. Hadju told me that the invoice amount was under investigation and that I did not have to pay the January 1999 bill and my service would not be cut off. He said that someone from Ameritech would be getting back to me shortly.

On or about March 15, 1999, I spoke to Cheryl Fletcher who was apparently investigating the matter for Ameritech and I reiterated that by computer was broken and at a repair shop for the period November 11, 1998 through November 20, 1998. I also told her that since the modem line number had been changed all bills were normal and there were no current problems. She said that she would continue to investigate. Ameritech never called me back on this matter.

In mid August 1999, I received a red *Final Disconnect Notice* from Ameritech dated August 4, 1999 for not having paid the January 1999 invoice. On or about August 24, 1999, I spoke with Dorothy Livernasy (?) at Ameritech about the disconnect notice and explained to her that the matter was under investigation: she said that there would be no disconnect. On August 25, 1999, I spoke to Joan Widi and explained the entire matter all over again. She also assured me that the phone would not be disconnected and said that she would continue to investigate the matter. I told Ms. Widi that I would be willing to pay some modest amount so as to dispose of this matter since I was constantly worrying that Ameritech would disconnect my phone service and in doing so hurt both my reputation and my business. She rejected my offer. I never heard again from Ms. Widi.

To the best of my recollection, I received another red *Final Disconnect Notice* from Ameritech in mid October 1999. On October 21, 1999, out of fear of further harassment by Ameritech, I explained the entire situation to Doretta of the Illinois Commerce Commission and filed a complaint. She told me that she would inform Ameritech that very day of my complaint and would also inform Ameritech that they could not disconnect or otherwise harass me while the matter was open for investigation.

In early December 1999, I received another red *Final Disconnect Notice* from Ameritech: an invoice in the amount of \$181.57 accompanied the notice. Ameritech asserted that the invoice was unpaid. I had been traveling, had a heavy schedule and I was pressed for time. Accordingly, I immediately paid the invoice amount on December 14, 1999 since I did not want to lose my telephone service. Later, on or about December 22, 1999, I called Ameritech on the \$187.57 and spoke jointly to Marsha of the collections group and Kathy of billings. I asked them what the \$181.57 was about and after considerable internal discussion, they told me that to the best of their knowledge, the amount was interest on the disputed \$2,700 January 1999 invoice. I told them that it was my understanding that they could not legally extract such payments while the ICC file was open. They said they had no record of any filing with the ICC and, in any event, once Ameritech had the money, it was its policy to never return it.

I was upset and called the Illinois Commerce Commission and spoke to Ken. I informed him that Ameritech had stated that they had no record of the ICC filing and he told me that Ameritech had indeed acknowledged to the ICC, on or about October 21, 1999, that they had been informed of my complaint status.

On or about January 5, 2000, Jesse Nabils of Ameritech called me in regard to this matter. I explained the entire situation to her and she told me that she would get back to me within a couple of weeks. She also said that she would notify collections to take no actions. Ameritech never called me back on this matter.

During the week beginning April 17, 2000, I was traveling and returned to my office late on April 19 to find that Ameritech had disconnected all of my telephone service: it is my understanding that regulations do not permit such action while a dispute file is open and filed with the ICC. I called Ameritech on April 20, 2000 and informed them once again of the disputed matter: telephone service was reconnected that day.

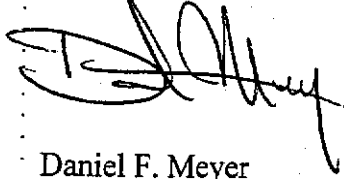
This has been a very long, exasperating and hurtful experience for me. I have been repeatedly harassed with red *Final Disconnect Notices* from Ameritech. Out of fear of losing my telephone service, Ameritech has extracted, illegally to the best of my understanding, a disputed interest payment of \$181.57 and they have now injured my reputation and damaged my business by disconnecting my telephone service. I fear that they have reported me to other data base entities as being a poor credit risk.

I need help. I want the illegally extracted payment back, I want my damaged reputation back, I want my business damages due to the disconnect, I want a guarantee, along with proof, that I have not been reported by Ameritech as a bad credit risk, I want the harassment to stop and I want this matter resolved.

MEYER

Could you please help me?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Meyer', written over a horizontal line.

Daniel F. Meyer  
DFM/mc

Cc: Jim Ryan  
Illinois Attorney General  
Office of the Attorney General  
Consumer Protection Division  
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